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**Krannert Art Museum Wins Award for Excellence**
**AAMC Honors Encounters: The Arts of Africa and Curator Allyson Purpura**

CHAMPAIGN, ILL., May 7, 2014 – Krannert Art Museum (KAM, http://kam.illinois.edu) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign was the recipient of a 2013 Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC, http://www.artcurators.org) Award for Excellence for its permanent collection installation, *Encounters: The Arts of Africa*, curated by Allyson Purpura. The installation was awarded co-First Prize in the annual AAMC Awards of Excellence for exhibitions organized by museums with operating budgets of under $4 million. The AAMC Awards of Excellence were formally announced on May 5, 2014 at the AAMC annual conference at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

“The Encounters installation is inspired by the idea that African objects ‘tell’ multiple stories, not only about themselves but also about the broader social contexts and often fraught global histories through which they have journeyed. Small thematic groupings and visitor-activated iPad videos of artist interviews, masquerade performances and narrative vignettes assist in the “telling” of those stories and draw out resonances among the objects on view. “As a 21st century museum, KAM is committed to raising awareness about the life
histories of African artworks and to its role in shaping our understanding of those histories,” Purpura stated, describing the central idea of the exhibition.

*Encounters: The Arts of Africa*
Krannert Art Museum,
Installation view, 2012
Photo by Chris Brown

*Encounters: The Arts of Africa* opened in October 2012 as a completely renovated space with an innovative interpretive framework and new casework and design. Historic artworks are displayed in conjunction with works by several African and African American studio-based artists, creating dialogues between “traditional” and “contemporary” art practices. Multimedia iPad programming was produced in partnership with Night Kitchen Interactive (http://whatscookin.com), based in Philadelphia.
About Allyson Purpura

Allyson Purpura is curator of African Art at Krannert Art Museum at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She received her Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from the City University of New York Graduate Center and a certificate in museum studies from George Washington University in Washington, DC. Her research on the social construction of Islamic expertise in Zanzibar led to her current interest in the broader connections between knowledge and power, particularly as they play out in the representational practices of museums. Her areas of interest include critical museology and curatorial practice; African art historiography; the anthropology of knowledge and theories of value; ephemeral art; word/images studies; the Swahili coast and transoceanic studies.
### About Krannert Art Museum

Krannert Art Museum and Kinkead Pavilion ([http://kam.illinois.edu](http://kam.illinois.edu)) promotes a vibrant exchange of ideas in the visual arts. The museum’s rich permanent collection contains over 10,000 works of art dating from the fourth millennium BCE to the present, making Krannert Art Museum the second-largest general fine art museum in Illinois. A unit of the College of Fine + Applied Arts ([http://faa.illinois.edu](http://faa.illinois.edu)) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ([http://illinois.edu](http://illinois.edu)), the museum is located at the corner of Sixth St. and Peabody Dr. in Champaign, Ill., one block east of Memorial Stadium. Complete information on events, exhibitions, location and hours of operation is available via the museum website.

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